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**In the Claims:**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions.

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Claims 1-6 (Cancelled).

7. (currently amended) A network comprising a plurality of network nodes [as claimed in claim 6], characterized in that

the network nodes are directly coupled to each other via at least one star node,

the star node includes a plurality of star interfaces that are assigned to at least one respective network node, with one star interface transferring data, in dependence on a pilot signal of varying frequency, from the assigned respective network node to the other star interfaces or from another star interface to the assigned respective network node,

a pilot signal evaluation circuit generates a send control signal and activates the send control signal if a pilot signal has been sent by the assigned network node and no other star interface having a higher priority has simultaneously sent a pilot signal from the network node assigned to this other star interface,

a star interface is provided for transferring data from the assigned network node to the other star interfaces only when the send control signal is activated,

each star interface includes a first and second switching amplifiers, the first switching amplifier in an activated state passes data from the assigned network node to the other star interfaces and the second switching amplifier in an activated state passes data from the other star interfaces to the assigned network node, and in the event of receiving the active send control signal, the first switching amplifier is in an active state and the second switching amplifier is in a non-active state,

a decision circuit evaluates the send control signals of all the star interfaces, and with a simultaneous occurrence of various send control signals corresponding to the simultaneous arrival of at least two pilot signals at respective star interfaces, the decision circuit releases via a decision control signal a certain star interface for the transmission of data, and

the decision circuit includes a chain of in-line decision elements each having an OR gate[, in] that [each OR gate] combines the output signal of the previous decision element with a local send request signal generated by the pilot signal evaluation circuit

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and indicating the presence of the pilot signal, [and in that] the output signal of an OR gate [is] being the decision control signal for the star interface assigned to the next decision element in the chain.

8. (previously presented) A network as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that the decision circuit includes a decision decoder decoding the send control signals, and a 1-from-m decoder receiving the output signals of the decision decoder, which 1-from-m decoder generates a respective decision control signal for the respective star interfaces.

9. (Cancelled).